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CAUSING  
OTHERS  
TO WANT  
YOUR  
LEADERSHIP  
*...for Teachers*

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# CHAPTER 1

## WHAT LEADERSHIP IS

People usually get to be leaders because they were good “doers.” A person often becomes a teacher because he or she was a good student and had a passion for learning. A teacher becomes a lead teacher or a department head or, eventually, an administrator because someone noted his or her potential. Most often, he or she demonstrated the ability to do a good job as an educator, and someone promoted him or her. Yet a good doer does not necessarily mean someone will be a good leader. Leadership is a whole new ball game. That’s why there are two important questions that need to be answered by everyone in or aspiring to hold a leadership position. The first question we will answer for you. The other, you will have to answer for yourself. The questions are:

1. What is leadership?
2. Are you a leader?

As certainly as some men and women have aspired to be leaders, others have been inspired by leadership. At some point a leader may have changed our lives and careers in either a positive, constructive way or a negative, destructive way. Without doubt, those who inspire others are those with a special ability to relate to and motivate others. More often than not, consciously or subconsciously, they apply the Laws and

Principles of Leadership to the nine individual motivators (all discussed later in this book) in a very constructive way.

They realize, above all else, that leadership is a function rather than a position. They know that their title alone does *not* signify to everyone that they are a leader. This attitude toward being in a leadership position is a must. Teaching is not a position; it is a function. Leadership, too, is a function.

There are many long and complex definitions of the word *leadership*. People have argued endlessly over minor points in the definition of the word and made long lists of what a leader is and is not and what a leader should or should not be. Unfortunately, too many people in leadership positions are never able to move past their personal definition of leadership and get the work of the classroom and school accomplished. Our schools are so highly complex and diverse that it takes a team of leaders working together with shared vision to meet the needs of students and our society.

**SIMPLE...**  
**YET**  
**ALL-INCLUSIVE**

Remember, we defined *leadership* as “causing others to want what you are doing to accomplish the work of the school.” Close examination should prove that this definition is all-inclusive. It is assumed, of course, that the leader is striving to meet the objectives of the institution. It is also assumed within this definition that a leader is doing nothing by word or deed which is contrary to the reasons for the creation or existence of the institution.

For example, a school must be student-centered. Meeting the needs of students is the reason for the creation and existence of schools. Schools employ teachers, nurses, counselors, administrators, cafeteria workers, custodians, and many others. Yet a leader cannot expect to cause others to want what he or she offers as a leader if his or her priorities and efforts are in the best interest of teachers and staff rather than students. Leadership efforts must be in agreement with the reason for the existence of the institution, or these efforts will not be accepted. They may not even be tolerated.

## **WANT IS THE KEY**

The key word in our definition of leadership is *want*. This word makes both leading and being led a rewarding experience. The word *want* automatically excludes such leadership practices as being dictatorial, self-centered, belligerent, or protecting the status quo. Why? Because people do not and will not ever come to a point of wanting leadership that is not offered in a style that respects and honors others.

The word *want* in this definition also changes the meaning of another word in the definition. Without the word *want*, one could easily be misled or misinterpret the word *causing*. In the day-to-day application of leadership, many teachers practice this definition without the words *causing* and *want* and it gets them into trouble.

The word *causing* can imply pressure, force, coercion and, even, fear. However, the word *want* in this definition eliminates all of these possibilities in leadership practices. No one wants to be bullied or intimidated by others. One chooses or wants leadership that they know is in sync with core values of the school. *Want* is an important word—it's a word that one aspiring to lead other people should not ever forget. Without this one word, caring might not be included in either leadership attitude or practice.

## **AN ADVANTAGE FROM BOTH SIDES**

A close look will reveal that this definition of leadership is one that you as a teacher need very much to live by. Equally important, it is one that the vast majority of those you lead will need to live by, too. It makes both leading and being led a satisfying and productive experience both personally and professionally.

## **EQUAL COMPETENCY ON THE HUMAN SIDE...**

The way you “cause others to want what you are doing” is with a thorough understanding and deep, personal commitment to the Laws and Principles of Leadership. Unfortunately, not very many teachers have been extensively exposed to the Laws and Principles of Leadership. Some may

not even know what they are. There may even be some in educational leadership positions who scoff at the laws and principles. Mostly, though, we hope school leaders fully realize that these laws and principles apply whenever one human being leads another. In addition, one of the reasons these laws and principles should be totally accepted and applied is that they help one find success for self as well as success for the institution. This is important. If one cannot find happiness, fulfillment, and a sense of recognition from others for his or her leadership efforts, then leading is not worth the price one must pay personally and professionally for it.

It's a fact: Leading can be a totally and overwhelmingly miserable experience for the leaders as well as those being led. Being a leader can be a most lonely and thankless professional job. Much of this despair is the product of being unprepared on this side of leadership. Teachers are trained to be teachers. Unfortunately, if they are not trained also to be leaders, they are forced to learn the human side of leadership alone and by trial-and-error experiences. Our institutions for teacher preparation rarely offer distinct training in the areas of communication skills and conflict resolution skills that are now required for success in the field. Teacher preparation often leaves out leadership training as an area for emphasis.

## **A RESULT OF OUR DEFICIENCIES**

In too many instances, negative staff members, parents, and pressure groups have taken leadership away from us. Make no mistake: This has happened because we have allowed it to happen. We have allowed it because we didn't know how to stop it. One of the reasons for this dilemma is that we have not had the advantage of training. Other professions often have extensive training programs for potential leaders. There are continual workshops, seminars, and meetings to help their executives cope with problems on the human side of leadership. Not us. We have had to learn the vast majority of our leadership skills through self-growth or trial and error. It is a very difficult way to learn, and we have paid a heavy price for each of our mistakes. We may still be paying for ones we made years ago. Thankfully, it is never too late to begin anew. With a solid foundation, old mistakes are forgotten if our leadership training contains good human relations practices.

## TWO COMMON APPROACHES TO LEADERSHIP

Many people in leadership positions believe that there are basically only two ways to motivate people to want leadership direction and accept those in leadership positions. One, assuming you have the ability to lead, is to make it *very pleasant* for people to do the things you want them to do or move in the direction you want them to go, individually or collectively. Or, two, you can make it *unpleasant* for people not to do the things you want them to do or move in the direction you want them to go, individually or collectively.

Our definition of leadership excludes the second choice of leadership direction. We believe if a person chooses behaviors, attitudes, or practices that are continually unpleasant in order to motivate, termination must be considered. Long-term success and satisfaction for this leader and those being led are impossible.

Unfortunately, there are many leaders who have had so many bad experiences in their efforts to “make it pleasant for people to do what you want them to do” that they have come to believe “you can’t be nice to people.” They believe a leader must carry a big stick and use—or threaten to use—it often to motivate people. When this is the adopted leadership attitude, the leadership personality becomes negative. One begins leading toward the negative and away from the positive.

Fortunately, successful leaders believe this kind of leadership is not good for them, the institution, or those being led. Not only does it make being led a terrible experience, it makes leading even more miserable. Those leaders who choose to abuse the power delegated to them and adopt a leadership philosophy and direction based on domination, fear, and mistreatment of those being led seldom find any degree of happiness and satisfaction in their life’s work. More importantly, they seldom survive in their positions of leadership over the long-term. In the years ahead, they will find survival almost impossible. The only way they will manage to stay in a leadership position is to move continually from job to job and district to district.

**COMMUNICATION  
IS A  
LEADERSHIP ABSOLUTE**

A key to causing others to want what you are doing is communication. If you can't communicate with people, you can't lead; much less cause others to want what you are doing. That's an absolute and unchangeable fact.

Yet communication remains a constant leadership problem. Leadership communication helps to effect acceptance and understanding by those being led—but at every level of responsibility, understanding seems to be a problem. This is revealed by everyone on all levels throughout the school and system. Everyone says the other doesn't understand.

Students say teachers and parents don't understand. Teachers say administrators don't understand. Administrators say teachers don't understand. We all say the public doesn't understand. Worse, at each level of awareness, the problem is often met with a form of rationalization that the fault lies not with us but with the one who does not understand.

**A  
LEADERSHIP  
RESPONSIBILITY**

In reality, it is the responsibility of the leader to "cause others to want what they are doing" to accomplish the work of the schools. This can only be achieved when the leader accepts the responsibility for this so-called understanding problem and then, through skilled communication and application of the Laws and Principles of Leadership, brings about understanding on every level inside and outside the institution. Understanding will never result without a leader's communicative action in a variety of ways on a continuous basis.

That's not to say that communication will eliminate all misunderstandings. It will not. Breakdowns will occur along the way. This is not the issue. The issue is that when leaders do not accept the responsibility for communication, then a lack of understanding will become a permanent condition rather than a temporary situation. Some leaders may be disappointed when their efforts don't bring total and instant understanding. Some get angry about it. Some stop communicating. Yet understanding is never total. However, without leadership communication, misunderstanding will be more common than understanding. Worse, it will become permanent. Make no mistake: Both communication and being understood are the responsibility of good leaders.

Certainly, problems in communication and understanding will always arise. But the constant reality of problems is never an allowable leadership excuse to shirk or rationalize away responsibility. The continuous emergence of the problems which result from both understanding and communication only serve to stress the fact that the need for skill and expertise on the human side of leadership is an absolute. Without such a foundation, we must rely on trial-and-error techniques.

Trial-and-error leadership techniques cause additional problems and always result in further misunderstanding. They cause institutions to regress, for it is always a matter of taking one step forward with every success and two steps backward with every failure. Trial-and-error techniques usually result in poor human relationships inside and outside the institution. On the other hand, the Laws and Principles of Leadership always give a leader direction as well as specific methods and techniques to employ in various situations with people. They provide a foundation of tried and tested expertise. The Laws and Principles of Leadership make every problem an opportunity for leadership success rather than another probability for embarrassment and failure. They remove much of the trial and error from leadership decisions and courses of action. Equally important, the laws and principles give the foundation out of which those being led can follow. Without doubt, the Laws and Principles of Leadership serve as the foundation for every beginning—in teacher attitude, perception, and action.

## **A BASE OF LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVITY**

The Laws and Principles of Leadership also do much for one's self-confidence. They are objective, not subjective. And that's what every teacher needs in problem situations: objectivity. In truth, a good teacher always seems to turn a problem situation into one which is beneficial to all—students, school, and the parties involved. The teacher looks good because problem situations are handled in agreement with sound educational practices. There are good reasons this is so. It's not always personality. One can't always rely on charisma. Sound leadership principles must accompany a teacher's individual personality if success is to be achieved and sustained.

Once a leader accepts the responsibility for the understanding of all within his or her orbit, the entire leadership outlook as well as its perception and procedure are easily adjusted or changed. A good leader never says others are responsible for not understanding. And his or her techniques to

“cause others to want what he or she is doing” include both the employment of sound management laws and principles as well as teaching those he or she leads by careful and planned explanations and communications. These communications always utilize the primary and secondary needs.

We will discuss the primary and secondary needs later. However, the first thing that must be considered is your personal and professional attitude toward leading as a teacher. Your leadership attitude begins by affirming and accepting the definition that leadership is “causing others to want what you are doing.”

It is not making someone do anything. Neither does it involve forcing or pressuring someone to accept your leadership or threatening him or her in some way if he or she doesn't. Fear has no place in education, and teaching is not the exception. This definition of leadership has no hidden meanings or interpretations. Real leadership has a great deal of empathy, persuasion, and teaching—without being dictatorial.

We all want to be good teachers. We all want to do a good job. We want good schools and good school systems. Many teachers also want to be inspiring, successful, and respected leaders. We want others to recognize our skills and appreciate our effectiveness. This can be done only through understanding people and knowing how to motivate and communicate to them the needs of students while finding professional fulfillment in the process. It can only be achieved with sound decisions which are in accordance with sound leadership practices.

## **ARE YOU A LEADER?**

The second question which you must answer for yourself is: Are you a leader?

When answering this question, there are some considerations you must recognize and deal with objectively. Remember, the probability is that you have been identified as a leader because you were a good “doer.” But just because you are a good doer does not necessarily mean you will be a good leader. In fact, everything you did to find success as a doer can work against your being a leader who can move people to higher levels of performance.

Leadership is a different and higher level of functioning. It requires specific abilities and actions—in attitude, problem solving, and implementing. Unless the doer position is dropped and the leadership position is assumed, a leader can operate in wrong ways and in wrong

directions. Having been a good doer can result in your becoming what we call a *mechanical manager*. For example, many leaders work very hard in their jobs. Yet, in truth, they are working hard doing their jobs in the same ways they did as doers—and not doing the job they need to do as leaders. They were such good doers that they can't allow themselves to be anything else. They like getting involved and digging in and actually doing a job. They can't let go. They can't delegate. They can't teach others to do—they can only do. For instance, a colleague calls us to her classroom because she needs help establishing order, and we return to the classroom time and time again to help her restore order. As a result, we think we are leading. In fact, we like returning to do the kinds of things we did so well as doers. It makes us happy and fulfilled and gives us a feeling that we are, indeed, good leaders.

We are happy and pleased that people need us. So time and time again we return to the task of a doer. We chair every meeting. We bring every proposal or idea to the department meetings. Then we mistakenly think people will be happy and pleased to see us “doing our jobs.”

We are amazed that our efforts are not appreciated and recognized. Unfortunately, they never will be. Worse, we will be criticized. This is mechanical management. We are doing rather than delegating or helping others out of their problems and teaching *them* to be masters of their profession. With students, our job is to teach them how to “do” rather than think for them or do tasks for them. The same is true of our colleagues and parents.

## **OUR TASK IS LEADING**

As mechanical managers, we not only don't do our jobs, we don't allow others to become competent in their jobs. When we simply fix everything continually, do others learn? The answer is no. In fact, people may keep having the same problems. Our doing may weaken their position. Others may become dependent, rather than self-sufficient, because of our actions. We have not helped those we lead gain skills or confidence when we operate as mechanical managers.

Our task in leading is not to be a doer—but to help others become doers and lead themselves. Unfortunately, in many ways we may derive satisfaction from doing. It makes us feel we are worth more than we are getting paid. It makes us feel that the school needs us and couldn't operate without us. And it makes us feel that we are doing a great job by what we are doing. Why? Quite frankly, because we do these things so well. We are

the *best* doers in our school, but we are not leaders. Then, when we are criticized for not being good leaders, we can't understand why. We need to understand that the reason our actions do not bring respect or higher levels of performance from those being led is that we are still doing those tasks that gave us the opportunity to be leaders—but we aren't doing those things leaders are supposed to do. In fact, we may even think more like a doer than a leader. In many, many ways the help given by a mechanical manager is degrading to those being led. More often than not, rather than appreciate your help, they are likely to form the opinion that you, as their leader, do not have the ability to lead. They may think you also believe that “nobody can do things right, except you.” They are also prone to believe that you do not respect or appreciate them.

As a teacher, you need to be a leader. Now you must concentrate on the tasks of a leader. You must teach those you lead to handle the situations which they must face. You are a teacher of doers. You are not just a doer. If you are, then you are merely a mechanical manager. It is only when teacher leaders share and teach that they become real leaders in the eyes of their peers.

### **A NEW LEVEL OF COMPETENCY**

Our level of success as leaders will be determined by how well we motivate and assist others in the attainment of their success. It will also be determined by how well we teach those we lead to solve problems and how well we resolve problems ourselves. That's why, to achieve leadership success, one must develop a logical and effective method of resolving each difficulty faced. This can only be achieved by adjusting our behavior or position to get others to adjust their behavior or position. This is how a leader changes negatives to positives. This is called *situation leadership*.

This is our goal, whenever possible. We want to change problem situations into positives. Second, we want to learn how to prevent these problem situations from occurring again. This can never be achieved by mechanical management.

### **WHAT ARE SITUATIONS?**

*Situations* are occurrences which cause us to be faced with actions and decisions to return our life and the lives of those we lead to the status which

existed prior to the negative occurrence. If possible, we want to improve our position and help others improve theirs. Remember, situations are opportunities for either leadership failure or success.

Because we are human beings, we encounter at least three personal and professional reactions and behaviors in every problem-solving situation. First, we usually have a tendency to react defensively. This is a common human response. It is not abnormal. However, it is not professional. When we automatically think that problems reflect upon us personally, our efforts as leaders can easily be devoted entirely to trying to absolve ourselves of both the problem and everything related to it. Unfortunately, when this behavior results, we abandon our leadership position. We can neither avoid a problem situation nor react to it personally or defensively. We must react professionally. If a doctor told you to lose twenty pounds and you did not, he or she would not react as if you had offended him. The doctor would react professionally. Therefore, the doctor is still in a position to help you with your problem.

As professionals, when we react personally and defensively to problems, we are likely to try to absolve ourselves of all responsibility during the problem situation. Then it is impossible to try to return to a position of leadership after the conflict passes. We won't act defensively if we remember that leadership acceptance and competency is not really measured before or after a problem situation. It is measured *during* it. That's when opinions are formed. They are utilized then as reference points at other times by those being led. They remember what happened the last time and anticipate what might happen the next time by how a leader reacted during the crisis.

Second, most people have a tendency not to face the reality that most adverse situations are, at least partially, created by them. Teachers are not the exception. This tendency is caused when we fail to accept the leadership law called the Law of Total Responsibility, which we will talk about later. However, if a leader accepts the definition of leadership which includes "causing others to want," then he or she can willingly accept the damage this common human tendency can cause both to him or her and to those he or she leads. When it is not accepted, problems don't get solved. They just get blamed on someone.

Third, many leaders fail to know, understand, and appreciate the common behavior and motivations of themselves and those they lead. That's why a brief study of the wants, needs, and motivations of human beings must be included in any study of leadership. If one can't understand the various motivations of people, one can't lead people. Before the rationale for the Laws and Principles of Leadership can be fully grasped and applied, we must come to a greater appreciation of not only what

motivates people to act as they do, but also what motivates us, as teachers and leaders, to act and think as we do.